

Project Management for Fun and Profit

Do you enjoy organizing, planning, and gathering all the necessary parts of a project together and then watching the fruits of your efforts come to life? If you have planned and organized a wedding or complex family vacation, you have participated in the discipline called "project management." Every agency must participate in project management, and some work groups struggle with this process. Learning the discipline can increase your value as an employee and could add significantly to your marketability. Practice project management and have some fun in the process as you plan or organize something like your summer vacation. Visit www.bubbl.us where you'll find an easy-to-use project management tool. The web site's "mind mapping" software is free and gives a sample of more sophisticated tools used by project managers. Have fun planning your deserved getaway.



Tackling the Thief of Time

Procrastination has been called the thief of time. Often procrastination occurs because of the magnitude, size, or pain linked to a project. Reduce these factors, and you will start moving forward. Divide projects into tasks involving three to five steps. Make the first steps small and no longer than five minutes in duration. Begin. Subsequent tasks will follow immediately or shortly after. A sense of accomplishment will reward the completion of each task. Before long, your large project will be complete.



Walk for Your Health and Your Wallet

Walking benefits your health and your wallet too, especially if you are financially responsible for any of your own health care costs such as co-pays for doctor office visits or medications. Research from the HealthPartners Research Foundation (reported primarily to business organizations) demonstrated that adults, especially those older than 50, who remain active and exercise regularly will significantly reduce health care costs to employers. Logically, if employers are saving money so are you!

Source: *Preventative Medicine (Journal)*, Oct. 2003.



What Your Employer Wants

Have you discussed job goals with your supervisor? Your job description outlines your many job duties, but perhaps you do not know what your supervisor hopes and expects you will accomplish? Sometimes this is not clearly written and it can change throughout the year. You must pay attention. Every position includes powerful but often untapped leverage to help the agency link each job to its mission and strategic plan. This linkage may be the secret to your success. Learn to see beyond the black and white of the printed job description, and instead understand its scope. Also, pay attention to two things: what issues concern your boss and what issues concern your agency's management.



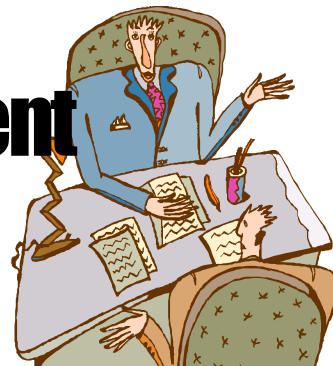
Intervene Early with Coworker Conflicts

When conflict with a coworker begins, *act early to intervene*. Avoid denying or suppressing your

feelings of anger as a coping strategy. As conflict worsens, the risk increases that you will act irrationally in response to a tense moment. When this happens, management often holds each employee equally accountable in the conflict and equally responsible for its resolution. This can lead to more frustration if you see yourself as the victim. Managing conflict is a life skill. To prevent problems: 1) let your coworker know you are sensing conflict at the time it occurs; 2) share your feelings in response to an issue or concern; 3) let your co-worker know which “rights” you feel are being ignored; and 4) ask for the change you need. It is important to remember that success comes by getting the change in behavior that works for you and not by making a coworker feel punished or blamed. Practicing these steps could save years of anguish. More important, a difficult relationship could potentially become a positive and beneficial one.



Your First Appointment with a Professional Counselor



If you have made the decision to see a professional counselor, you may be wondering what to say when you get to your first appointment. Many people worry they will be asked to share their deepest thoughts, fears, hopes, and dreams with a stranger in the first session, but that usually does not happen. After completing the necessary paperwork, your counselor will help guide the interview. If you think about the following issues before the first appointment, you can maximize the time you spend in your first session. Your counselor wants to listen a lot at first because you are the expert on your life. The main concern is determining if the counselor has the skills that are a good match for your needs. Knowing what prompted you to come, what difficulties you are facing, what you think caused the problem, and what you think might help resolve it are very important. Include what you are currently experiencing, what's bothering you, and what things you want to be different in your life. Now you are ready for a great learning and growing experience through professional counseling.

Add “Value” to Your Job Interview

If you have a great résumé and the ability to discuss your skills, experiences, abilities, and what you can bring to a position, add one more element—the ability to discuss your *work values*. You will be especially remembered after the job interview. The ability to communicate enthusiasm, what “moves” you, and how your purpose in life relates to the position can make all the difference in a job interview. This takes some deeper thinking. One way you can organize your thoughts or get clarity on whether you are in the right career is to explore the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT), produced and updated annually by the federal government. This book contains thousands of job descriptions and related functions, plus much more. Each description includes a discussion of work values satisfied by that job. Do your values match? You can quickly find out, and if they do, you will be better prepared to talk about the job and about your passion during the interview. Find the DOT at www.occupationalinfo.org.



Hazards Around the House

Accidental death in the workplace is the key concern of safety professionals. However, did you know that the next most dangerous place for unintentional fatal accidents is the home? Household members older than 70 and younger than five are at the highest risk. People over 80 years of age are twenty times more at risk. Falls present the biggest threat, accounting for 42 percent of deaths at home. June is National Home Safety Month, sponsored by the Home Safety Council. Accidents increase this time of year with outdoor activities, such as lawn mowing, barbecuing, swimming and gardening. Beware and be extra cautious!

